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ABSTRACT

Five models for the behavior change process at both the individual and the systemic level are proposed. The author sees them as comprising an integrated or eclectic approach, which he defines as using that which is most appropriate for achieving goals. The five models, which are central in the author's program of counselor education, are: (1) the client-centered relationship model (Rogers); (2) the behavioral model, which is based on learning theory; (3) the social psychological model (Adler); (4) the reality model (Glasser); and (5) the rational-cognitive model (Ellis). The particular strengths and appropriateness of each model are discussed. The paper concludes by acknowledging that no one technique or model is adequate by itself; whatever seems appropriate and workable from any one of the models should be used. (TL)

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IS A THEORY OF ELEMENTARY COUNSELING PER SE PASSE FOR THE 1970's?

(AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO MODIFYING BEHAVIOR: INDIVIDUAL AND SYSTEM CHANGE)

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During the last decade, elementary guidance has undergone considerable experimentation with some innovation in role and functions that is different than secondary guidance. The three functions generally stated are counseling, consultation, and coordination. A fourth function that I like to identify separately and one I consider important, is child study, although this is sometimes included with coordination. Each of the four functions are directly or indirectly a phase of the behavior change process and require that the counselor, if he is to be effective, be able to facilitate changes, both individual and system or institutional change.

The social and psychological problems that we face in the 1970's will require the application of all the behavioral and teaching technology that we can muster from the behavioral sciences, and then we will be successful only if our methodology is based upon sound philosophical beliefs about what man is and can become. Counselors will be expected to make a creative response to needs and problems such as: facilitating learning and individual development; assisting children in their search for an identity and meaning in life; meeting the common and exceptional needs of children; remediating learning difficulties; helping children to cope with behavior and adjustment problems; educating the disadvantaged child; reducing school dropouts and unemployment; reducing crime and juvenile delinquency; curbing mental illness; and reducing the emotional effects of parent separation which may affect 1/4 to 1/3 of the families in the next decade or two. The counselor will need to be competent in counseling and consulting skills for working with children and with significant adults in the child's life.

Four groups of persons are essential to the behavior change process, thus a counselor ought to have some expertise in working with these different groups:

children, parents, school staff, and community personnel. The two elementary guidance functions that involve the counselor with these groups are counseling and consultation. There is considerable overlap in the knowledge and the competencies necessary to implement these two functions with the four groups of persons mentioned above. However, there are unique knowledge areas and skills that are needed for working with these various groups. For example, some of the consulting competencies needed for working with parents and teachers are different than the counseling competencies needed for working with children.

It is my opinion that in the past and even currently, we as counselor educators are graduating (certifying) persons who are unable to meet the expectations of the people in the educational community of reality or fulfill the role and functions we espouse in our ivory towers. Putting it simply, we are expecting elementary counselors to do a job or perform a function for which they are not being prepared. The burden of responsibility is on us not the counselors in training or in the field. However, wherever possible practicing counselors should seek updated training and counselor educators must make it possible to provide intensive training programs and followups.

I am proposing five models for the behavior change process which have evolved for me over the last five years as a counselor educator in preparing elementary school counselors. My contact with counselors, teachers, administrators, and parents has indicated that the traditional training we have given counselors has not been very potent in the behavior changing process. In trying to purify ourselves theoretically with a theory of counseling, we have made ourselves impotent practically. The needs and expectations of the above people require that counselors and counselor educators take more initiative in planning and promoting change. The last several years have provided an explosion of knowledge in behavior technology. Thus it is essential that counselors and

teachers update their knowledge and skills for the doing phase of change.

Out of my experiences in the university in assisting in the preparation of more than 150 elementary school counselors, in consulting with counselors in elementary schools in the midwest, and in working with children, teachers, and parents, I have put together an integrated approach made up of five models for facilitating individual and system change in an educational setting. Initially, I used primarily a client-centered relationship model in training counselors. While this approach seemed necessary in communicating at a meaningful level with children as well as adults, it often did not seem sufficient for bringing about observable changes in behavior. The behavioral model became helpful in identifying specific goals for counseling and consultation, providing procedures for producing change, and enabling the counselor to assess the outcomes.

The reality model (Glasser) enables the counselor to get a handle on systems change as well as use a four step procedure for assisting the student in formulating a plan for change and in making a commitment. The social psychological model (Adlerian) gives the counselor methods and materials for working with parents especially as well as with teachers and children. Lastly, the rational-cognitive model gives counselors a basis for assessing personal characteristics or more frequently an approach for helping the person change his behavior through changing his thought patterns to a more rational context sometimes simply by getting new and more accurate information.

It then appeared to me that if a counselor could use any procedure or combination of procedures from these models after mutually determing the goals with the other person, he would be an effective change artist in the behavior changing process with such a broadly conceived approach. I refer to this as an integrated approach or eclectic if we mean using that which is most appropriate for accomplishing our goals. I cannot support eclecticism if we define it as being the best from each to create a new, conglomerate theory. Eclecticism

seems to be coming into vogue again, if it ever was, and appears somewhat respectable for the 1970's. Inherent is this variable approach is the choice of a technique or procedure which gives primary emphasis to thoughts, feelings, or actions, depending upon the competencies of the counselor, the preference of the counselee, and the nature of the problem or situation.

Two global strategies for change are individual and system. By individual change I am referring to a counselor working with a child, a teacher, or a parent with the primary focus being change for an individual child, but there is no planned or directly resultant effect upon the system. By system or institutional change I am referring to planned change which will affect a group the size of a classroom or even a subgroup within the classroom, change across an entire grade level, or vertical change through grade levels for the school, or change involving several schools or all schools within a school system under the same administrative control. Each of the five models, some more than others, have implications for individual and system change. Frankly, if we don't consider changing the system but just try to help individuals change their behavior within the existing environment, all we really have is a type of fix-em-up model in which we keep losing ground in our efforts to prevent problems and at the same time we are limiting the development of human potential.

Relationship Model

Effective interpersonal relationships are essential to any change, either individually or institutionally. In this model emphasis is directed toward genuine interpersonal communication and responding to feelings and the affective domain of human growth and development. It provides a point of view and a method for personalizing the educational process. Affective objectives are given greater priority for developing human values that give each person worth and dignity and a meaningful identity in a social setting.

The characteristics of a helping relationship -- genuineness, empathy, and

unconditional positive regard -- have been so widely accepted in counselor preparation programs, that they are a part of almost every counselor's training, sometimes to the exclusion of other approaches for helping persons to grow and change. I see the relationship as necessary although many times not sufficient for therapeutic and educational change. Be it sufficient to say that the relationship is an essential condition underlying the change process for all the models.

The counselor must develop a high level of therapeutic responding that will facilitate the development of a positive, independent, and creative self in others. This relationship is essential in working with children, staff, parents, and the community. The behavior of the counselor can serve as a model for others in the school community.

Major concepts and procedures are genuineness, unconditional positive regard, empathy, self-disclosure, and concreteness and specificity of responses (rather than abstractness and generalities). These characteristics should be an integral part of a counselor preparation program and should be facilitated in the elementary school setting by the counselor.

System change could be facilitated through staff development experiences to increase self-awareness and sensitivity to others with more honesty and openness of communication, so that the system has built in feedback for faster, more accurate, and more complete communication. Human relations groups, communications groups, or simply staff development groups can be planned with self-development as the major goal or consideration of common staff concerns and personal feelings about them. I am not suggesting that the counselor in the school necessarily be the person in the school to conduct such groups, but he can model behavior such as that mentioned above in his everyday relationships with individuals and small groups in the school setting.

Affective objectives in the curriculum are receiving increased attention,

but only a handful of administrators, teachers, and counselors are attempting to implement in any planned way the materials and techniques that elicit and develop greater awareness and appreciation of the attitudes, feelings, values, and interests of oneself and others. Group guidance materials are now available for involving children affectively. The counselor, therefore, needs to be competent in responding to affective behavior as well as creating an environment which helps persons to get in touch with their feelings. Thus the school counselor can be an important catalyst for humanizing the educational process through affective involvement with persons in the school setting.

Behavioral Model

Behavioral techniques based upon learning principles are useful for increasing motivation, for developing and improving the academic skills, and for modifying personal and social behavior. The emphasis is upon actions more than thoughts and feelings. Change is facilitated through changing overt behavior that can be observed rather than initiating change with and through thoughts and feelings. Research and field use have demonstrated the potency of some of the behavioral techniques for changing behavior. An advantage of this approach is that the dimensions of the change in behavior are specified. Specific problems are identified, specific goals are established, and specific procedures are used. There is a built in self-correcting system since the outcomes are assessed and feedback enables the teacher or counselor to modify the procedures.

Behavioral techniques can be used with individuals and with groups the size of the classroom, or some modified behavioral plan could be formulated for the entire system. They have been especially promising for children who have educational, emotional, or neurological disabilities, although the techniques apply to all children.

Some of the major concepts and procedures that have possible use in a public school setting are: role playing, reinforcement, behavioral contracting, social

modeling, contingency management in the classroom, relaxation techniques, and desensitization. The particular behavioral technique that I want to elaborate upon is reinforcement, particularly positive reinforcement. This technique seems to be gaining rapid acceptance by teachers for classroom use although it needs to be adapted for age level and the local setting.

The environment, that is, the situation may provide a reinforcer to a person as a consequence of a response in any one of the following ways: (1) give positive reinforcement; (2) take away a positive reinforcer; (3) give negative reinforcement; and (4) take away negative reinforcement.

In the application of reinforcement techniques to counseling and teaching, the strategy is to make maximum use of positive reinforcement and minimal use of negative reinforcement. Social, material, or token reinforcers may be used for rewarding appropriate behavior. There are several procedures which are essential for this approach. First we must specify the specific behaviors which are inappropriate or appropriate, but need to be developed. After the behaviors are specified it is crucial that the reinforcement follow the behavior to be modified, thus the timing is critical. Teachers usually have difficulty rewarding behavior that does not reach an expected standard or level. However, it is important that the person be initially rewarded for successive approximations, that is, for behaviors which approach the desired behavior. At times inappropriate or disruptive behavior may have to be limited by the use of negative reinforcement or a "time out" which is more of a neutral situation. In "time out" the individual is simply asked or allowed to leave the upsetting situation and be alone until he believes he is able to return and accomodate himself to the task or the social situation. One of the useful techniques for planning and arranging the contingencies of reinforcement is the behavior contract, a verbal or written agreement between two or more persons specifying what each person will do for or during a stated period of time.

The behavioral model, specifically reinforcement techniques, is not only useful in working directly with individual students, but it offers a basis upon which we can assess whether we attend primarily to positive or negative behavior in structuring the learning climate. Teachers as well as parents can use these techniques to restructure the child's environment including changing their own responses to the child so that more appropriate consequences will occur.

System change can be accomplished through a planned strategy for making the emotional climate of the classroom a positive one instead of what is too often a negative environment. This means that the teacher has a high response rate to appropriate and positive behaviors in the children. Appropriate social behaviors can be developed by attending to the desired behavior when it is emitted by the pupils in the room. Pupil behavior can also be managed for improving academic learning. A variety of reinforcers are available to the teacher for rewarding appropriate academic behaviors. Social, token, or material rewards can be used to sustain the interest and effort for attending to the learning task and staying involved in the process. An entire class or grade level could operate on the basis of a point system that can be exchanged for privileges or material rewards such as extra recess, extra library time, toys, etc. Such a plan would require that each pupil be on an individualized learning plan which would insure success if he asserts any reasonable effort.

All of us in everyday life and certainly as teachers we frequently use reinforcement in encouraging or discouraging certain behavior in others. Usually this is done without any systematic plan, limited consistency, and without any great awareness of what it is we are doing. This model provides us with a systematic way to bring about change and development of specific behaviors.

Social Psychological Model

Another model in which change hinges heavily upon the consequences of the

person's actions is the social psychological model based upon the psychology of Alfred Adler and the methodology of Rudolph Dreikurs. The major emphasis is upon the social determinants of behavior, which is viewed as purposive and goal-directed. Family and peer group relationships develop from the need for belonging and the individual's relationships within these two social groups are important concerns for educational personnel if they are to understand and change behavior. Several major concepts and procedures are (1) encouragement, (2) natural and logical consequences, (3) style of life, (4) interpretation, (5) family constellation, and (6) goals of children's misbehavior.

Every child is primarily concerned with having a place in the group. A well-behaved and well-adjusted child has found his way toward social acceptance by conforming to the requirements of the group and by making useful contributions. However, the child who misbehaves does so with the belief that his actions will give him social status. He may try to get attention, attempt to prove his power, seek revenge, or display his inadequacy of deficiency in order to get special service or exemption. Whichever of these four goals he adopts, he believes that only in this way can he function within the group.

One of the methods that is effective in teaching normal and disturbed children to be responsible for themselves and to others is through the use of natural and logical consequences. So many times adults prevent children from experiencing the natural and logical consequences of their behavior. We intervene to scold, punish, or advise. Every act has a consequence and we can assume that no one will willingly do what he believes is not good for himself. Natural consequences are the direct result of the child's own acts without any adult intervention, and represent the natural flow of events in reality. Logical consequences are arranged and explained by the parent or another adult so that there is a logical connection between the act and the consequence. Natural and logical con-

sequences are different than punishment which is a punitive or retaliatory response to the child.

Within the context of counseling, the counselor is active and more directive than with the relationship model in exploring with the counselee his interpersonal relationships and the social meaning of his behavior. The counselor listens in order to pick up the theme. He may interrupt to point out self-deceptive tendencies, may interpret or suggest, and does provide information as it appears necessary. However, he allows the counselee to decide his own course of action.

An essential value of this model is its relevance for helping teachers and parents understand the meaning of the child's behavior and for using effective procedures to change behavior. One of the real strengths is a methodology for working with parents so that teachers and counselors can provide family guidance. The counselor can conduct study groups for parents as well as teachers. This model can be implemented readily because of the appropriate materials developed by Rudolph Dreikurs and others for use with teachers and parents.

Reality Model

The reports of elementary counselors and the observations of counselor educators would indicate that the elementary counselor has been very limited in the amount of change that he has been able to bring about in the system, that is, at the building level. I believe that many teachers, principals too, desire system change, but need encouragement, direction, and a plan for change. William Glasser's reality therapy provides a plan which is humanly and practically sound for system change in the elementary school. The requirements of reality therapy -- a warm personal involvement, facing reality, rejecting irresponsible behavior, and learning better ways to behave -- seem to be philosophically and psychologically congruent with the basic concepts of guidance for developing persons who are responsible and independent. Basic concepts and procedures include the

steps of reality therapy, relevance, involvement, commitment, and group techniques for classroom meetings.

In reality therapy one's past behavior is not important for planning change. The evaluation and planning focus upon actions more than thoughts and feelings and on what he has done, not why has he done it. In working with a student or a group on changing behaviors, there are these steps: (1) the student identifies his behavior; (2) the student makes a value judgement of his behavior, and/or (3) the student identifies the consequences of his behavior and makes a value judgement of them; and (4) the student formulates a plan and is expected to follow through. If the student does not follow his plan, the teacher or counselor should have another session with him in which he chooses another of the alternatives or formulates a new plan. The plan between the student and the teacher or counselor can be a verbal or written agreement, which is the commitment that each person makes. If the student breaks the commitment no excuses are accepted, but the person is simply asked to make a new plan and recommit himself. A student is responsible for the behavior and must accept the consequences of it whatever they may be. The teaching of responsibility is the most important task of reality therapy. This is learned through mutual involvement, rejection of the unrealistic behavior, and finding better ways to fulfill one's needs within the confines of reality.

In Schools Without Failure, Glasser presents a plan which encompasses some rather drastic changes in curriculum, methodology, and discipline. Thinking and problem-solving are emphasized instead of fact and memory education. The traditional grading is abolished, objective tests give way to open-book type examinations, heterogeneous grouping is recommended, and efforts are made to make all aspects of the curriculum relevant to the life of the child. Essential to the plan are the social problem-solving classroom meetings which are non-judgmental discussions about matters that are important and relevant to the children.

Besides social problem-solving meetings, Glasser talks about open-ended class meetings which encourage problem-solving and brain-storming thinking about topics of interest to them.

Children are not punished, but are required to be responsible for their behavior. The response the adult makes to the student is one to make him responsible for his behavior, not a retaliatory or suppressive response. Every child is expected and provided a means to have a success identity which is encompassed by feelings of love and self worth. The reality model thus provides a strategy for making basic changes in the educational system.

Rational-Cognitive Model

The last model I want to discuss is a rational-cognitive approach to changing behavior. Of the five models, it is one of the least written about approaches in the literature of guidance and educational psychology. Yet in a non-systematic way, we use this method more than any other in an attempt to change behavior at the thought level by imparting information through explanation, questioning the logic of the other person's thoughts, or interpreting what the consequences may be if one continues to think the way he is, especially if he decides to act on the thought. We see evidence in religion of the importance given to thoughts through such concepts as salvation by faith (beliefs), not through feelings or actions, and the power of positive thinking popularized by Norman Vincent Peale.

A basic guidance concept that is frequently written into a school's philosophy or statement of objectives is the necessity to provide information to pupils about themselves and their environment so that they can understand themselves and relate self to environment. In implementing this point of view in a school system, we have considered it important to assess intellectual functioning and behavioral characteristics, even inventing sophisticated labeling

systems and diagnostic techniques. Part of the appraisal information, standardized and non-standardized, which is given as feedback to the person is provided to him so he can formulate and clarify his thoughts about himself. Use of this information is part of the developmental process of growing up as well as being important in the everyday decisions which we make.

One rational-cognitive method which has been developed as a systematic approach to changing what we think about ourselves, others, and environmental events is a methodology developed by Albert Ellis which he calls rational-emotive psychotherapy, and which is presently being applied experimentally in educational settings by psychologists, counselors, and teachers. Ellis' method is not so much concerned about appraisal information, but with the process of restructuring our thinking in more accurate and logical ways. I now want to discuss the basic concepts and procedures in which behavior, emotions in particular, can be changed by focusing on one's thoughts and beliefs. Basic concepts and procedures are rational-emotive behavior, irrational thinking, the ABC theory of behavior, and re-education.

Central to the rational-emotive approach (part of the larger model which I have called rational-cognitive) are the following basic concepts regarding thinking and the re-education process:

(1) We are uniquely rational as well as irrational. When we are behaving rationally we are effective, happy, and competent.

(2) Emotional or psychological disturbance (neurotic behavior) is a result of irrational and illogical thinking.

(3) Since we are thinking creatures and thinking occurs through symbols or language, an emotional disturbance persists as long as the irrational thinking persists. The phrases and sentences we keep telling ourselves frequently <u>are</u> or <u>become</u> our thoughts and emotions.

(4) Negative and self-defeating thoughts and emotions must be attacked by reorganizing our thinking so that our thinking becomes logical and rational.

(5) The goals of re-education or counseling (behavior change) are to demonstrate to the person that his self-verbalizations have been the source of his emotional disturbance, to show that this self-talk is illogical and irrational, and to change the negative statements and self-defeating behavior by having him think and talk about himself in more logical and rational statements.

Several of the eleven irrational ideas which cause and sustain emotional disturbances according to Albert Ellis in Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy are:

(1) The idea that it is a dire necessity for . . . a human being to be loved or approved by virtually every significent other person in his community.

(2) The idea that it is awful and catastrophic when things are not the way one would very much like them.

(3) The idea that it is easier to avoid than to face certain life difficulties and self-responsibilities.

Techniques used for this model are explanation, interpretation, questioning, reasoning, suggesting, and prescription of certain activities which serve as homework that enables the person to experience events which would tend to reinforce new thoughts and beliefs. This type of directive re-education or therapy resembles what appears to be characteristic of the classroom teaching process, but there are differences underlying these techniques. First it is necessary that the teacher or counselor be nonjudgmental about the worth of the person. The other person is accepted without any conditions attached, but has intrinsic value because of his being, not because of his performance. Secondly, there is the assumption that the other person is dissatisfied enough about his feelings and self to be willing to try to change his irrational and illogical beliefs. The teacher in the classroom frequently doesn't have this willingness from the student because of his position of authority and the likelihood of a power struggle between the teacher and the student.

The rational-cognitive model provides another approach to modification of behavior in which a change in behavior results from a re-structuring of the way

we think about ourselves and our world, hopefully in a more rational way. With this approach the counselor is essentially a teacher who applies a rational, problem-solving process in a teacher-learner relationship.

Summary

I have presented five models for modifying behavior through individual and systems change. They give different emphases to the importance of using thoughts, feelings, or actions for changing behavior. The one which stresses thoughts is the rational-cognitive model. The relationships model emphasizes feelings. Those models which stress the action component of the person are the behavioral, social psychological, and reality approaches, although it should be obvious that thoughts, feelings, and actions are not separate components of our personality, but part of an integrated system and are part of all the models. Each model has its own uniqueness and strengths. The behavioral and reality models provide a plan for system change as does the relationship model, but the relationship model seems more threatening to teachers than the other two, particularly the behavioral. The relationship model provides conditions for change, the others procedures for change. Some lend themselves more to teacher and parent consultation than others, especially the behavioral and social psychological. Some are more appropriate for curriculum change, namely the relationship and reality models. The behavioral model can have greatest impact on teaching technology. All have usefulness for the counselor within and beyond the counseling session in working with individuals and small groups. The style of learning established by the child (or style of life or style of change) is important in determining which procedures to use from the different models in individual counseling.

I hope that the five models proposed, although having points of contrast, can be part of an integrated plan for educational personnel to use in modifying behavior. No simple technique or model is adequate in and of itself, but whatever seems appropriate and workable from any one of the models should be used.